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Domestic mechanisms for the implementation of international obligations in the Swiss cantons

Constance Kaempfer*

In Switzerland, as in most states, a gap exists between the state's international commitments and the reality on the ground. Switzerland being a federal state, this gap must be filled at the federal and cantonal levels in accordance with the constitutional division of competences. This study sheds light on concrete factors that improve the implementation of international legislative obligations in the Swiss cantons. Based on theoretical considerations and empirical observations, the paper defines and discusses the concept of «domestic implementation mechanisms». By studying mechanisms that work in isolation in a specific case jointly, the study offers the possibility to highlight implementation mechanisms that already exist, but which may not be qualified as such. The results provide actors at the cantonal level with hints as to how synergies could be created and highlight common characteristics enhancing parliamentary engagement.

Keywords: international obligations – implementation mechanisms – Swiss cantons

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